000 of small stones contained in a hollow gourd which they hold in their hands and rattle to beat time."

764 "They bury their dead very close to the surface, being satisfied to dig a shallow pit into which they place the corpse half sitting up, with a few small branches beneath and on top of him and a little earth. Because of this it often comes about that jaguars, who can easily dig up these careless graves, get a taste for human flesh and become man-eaters. Sometimes the Indians put a little pot of water in the grave for the deceased's benefit. They also commonly burn a few things which he had used, and also his hut. The relatives of the deceased have to go to his burial place and lament over it, accompanying their cries with the pimpin. These wailings, according to the locality, are repeated for some days. They have also other
● [177] customs which they have picked up from the Tobas, to whom they are related and with whom they are friendly."

181 "It can be seen, then, that the Mataco tribe is at present a very
648 miserable one. Their way of living and their customs, furthermore, and the circumstances of our times together with the region in which they live do not point to a particularly happy future. It certainly cannot be said that the Matacos who live in Bolivian territory are declared enemies of the [607] whites or Christians, rather is it true that they sometimes work for them and say that they are friends of the whites and wish to be treated as such, in spite of the fact that this friendship seems feigned, a cloak under which they can the better steal and conceal themselves. They rustle the Christians' cattle which they exchange with the Tobas for horses, and these in turn they trade off to the Christians for other things they need, saying that they have captured these animals from their enemies."

181 "Across from the Mission of San Francisco de Pilcomayo and
787 on the banks of the river (the Pilcomayo River--Translator) are the ruins of the Mission of San Antonio, made up of Matacos brought together in 1863 and which, after having been in Bella Esperanza for two or three years were transferred to this place, where they stayed, in quite sizeable numbers, until 1879, in which year they escaped, although groups of them had fled and returned more than once before. While they remained at the Mission little or nothing could be accomplished with them in any way--they would not even consent to allowing their little children to be baptized when at the point of death. The

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

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342 against rain and wind. In these huts the Chaco Indian spends most of his time, sitting or lying on the ground or on the goat or sheep skin which forms his most important personal property. In the daytime, however, if the weather is fine, he prefers to stay outside the house engaged in various occupations or in eating or drinking, and in the summer time when no rain is falling and the temperature is high, he frequently even passes the night in the open air.

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342 Whereas primitive huts of this type are still customary among the Pilagá and other Argentine Tobas as well as among distant Mataco tribes, the Mataco and Tobas on the Bolivian side nowadays make houses of the same form as the whites, constructed of beams or balks with walls of cane and roofs of twigs and grass. Still these houses are so badly built that it is no rare thing to see a passing whirlwind sweep off the roofs and damage the walls.

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361 A Choroti or a Mataco village consists of six to twelve huts, generally arranged in a circle round an open space which serves as a field for games and as a tethering place for the small flocks of sheep and goats possessed by the Indians. In the middle of this space there is usually a shady algaroba tree under which the men of the village assemble for deliberations and where the drinking-bouts take place. In building their settlements the Indians first of all make sure of the existence of water in the neighbourhood, be it the river Pilcomayo itself or one of those insignificant pools which are found here and there in the interior of the Chaco; secondly, the place must offer the necessary pasture for their flocks; and thirdly, the Indians always settle in the vicinity of a forest where they can find plenty of the wild fruits on which they to a great extent subsist, and the trees of which offer some protection against the burning rays of the sun during the hottest hours of the day. Further, being anti-social and shy, the Indians preferably chose for their settlements a place hidden away from the main track. Seldom or never are they found close to the banks of a river: generally one has to travel one or a few miles into the interior to find their villages.

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361 The villages of the Tobas and the Ashluslay are generally larger than those of the Choroti and the Mataco because the tribes are larger, but they are arranged on the same principles. All Chaco tribes live in village communities — this is a feature which differentiates these tribes from those of the tropical virgin forests. The vast pampas regions, of course, favour the rise of larger societies, whereas in the great virgin forests the different families necessarily live scattered.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

Social classes do not exist among the Choroti, nor any distinction between rich and poor. All members of this primitive society are equally rich or equally poor and, owing to the great social sympathy which unites them, property is in practice to a great extent common to all. The relative communism or socialism existing among the lowest Chaco tribes will be touched upon later.

The social organization of the *Mataco* was originally the same as that of the Choroti, but the Mataco-Noctenes of Bolivia have in this as in other respects been considerably influenced by the Tobas and probably also by the Avas, and therefore at present stand socially higher than the primitive Choroti. As to the *Tobas*, in their social organization they are much superior to the Choroti, although their society is essentially founded on the same principles. Even among the Tobas the »tribe» is in its essence only a group of families united by the tie of blood-relationship. But whereas among the Choroti the chief is nothing but a respected family father without real power, the Toba chief, called *alyánek*, seems to exercise a considerable authority, at least in time of war. Although the Tobas have not been conquerors in the same sense as the Avas, they have always been a warlike race of Indians, and such peoples generally have more strongly organized societies than those who have never or only rarely tried their strength in fighting against enemies and have not grown accustomed to the order and discipline which war requires.

Social ranks and classes in the strict sense of the words do not exist among the Tobas, just as they are unknown to the Avas; but we can trace the germ of a nobility in the fact that the sons and descendants of a great cacique or war chief generally enjoy greater esteem than other members of the society. The chiefs have power to command, especially in times of war, when their orders are unfailingly obeyed. They distingush themselves from the rest of their people by having several wives and often by being richer, since of the spoils taken in war the main part is allotted to them. Formerly they also distingushed themselves externally from other men by a peculiar arrangement of the hair. According to the Catholic missionaries Dobrizhoffer and Charlevoix,[1]) all Guaycurú tribes used to pluck out the hair from the forehead to the crown of the head so that the forepart was bald. This arrangement, which had magic significance, was called *nalemrá*, and was the reason why the Tobas were called by the Spaniards

[1]) Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, II. 17. Charlevoix, *Historia del Paraguay*, I. 135.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI 12
Choroti SK 6

very qualities which the Indians appreciate in their leaders. He was valiant, cunning, and eloquent, and, being a great warrior, had provided his people with firearms which made the Tobas superior in war to all other Chaco tribes and dangerous enemies even to the whites.

The Eakachi, as is customary in the Chaco, hold their assemblies under a shady algaroba tree, generally at the time of the new moon. Besides watching the conduct of their chiefs, they have to deliberate questions of war and peace and to appoint an extraordinary chief when an attack against an enemy is planned. In addition, they act as judges or arbitrators in quarrels and fights between the men.

A social feature characteristic of all Chaco tribes is the relative matriarchy or »mother-right» prevailing among them. Descent is traced through the female, the child being supposed to belong to the mother's, and not to the father's, tribe or clan. Closely connected with this idea is the custom prevailing among most matriarchal peoples, that when a man marries, he stays with his wife's family, becoming a member of her clan. All these features are found among the Pilcomayo tribes, but particularly among the *Choroti* where »mother-right» has developed into real mother-rule. Thus in those parts of the Choroti country where they are neighbours with other tribes and intermarriage takes place, it is the rule that if the woman is of the Choroti tribe the children become members of that tribe, whereas, if a Choroti man marries a woman of another tribe, he himself and the children become members of that tribe. This was particularly noticeable in regard to the Ashluslay in the South with whom the Choroti frequently intermarry. Thus the »great chief» of the Choroti living near the fort Guachalla, the old Atamo, was on his father's side of Ashluslay descent, but his mother being a Choroti woman he had himself become a Choroti.

The »mother-right» of the Choroti is not carried to such an extreme that for instance the maternal uncle or some other relative on the mother's side is regarded as the guardian of the children. Among the Choroti both parents are the guardians of the child although, as in other matters, the mother has always more to say. Nor does it imply that parentage is wholly attributed to the mother. On the contrary, the custom of couvade, as it is observed by the Choroti, shows that this maternal people is well aware of the father's great rôle in the procreation of children. The »mother-right» of the Choroti and of other Chaco tribes is in fact only a secondary phenomenon, evidently dependent on the social conditions which have developed among the tribes in this country, and which in their turn

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

M 556

other tribes have larger flocks and more wives than the rest of their people. It is not a part of the Indian's nature to accumulate property for the future. This habit of living from hand to mouth is the chief reason of the poverty characteristic of the Chaco Indians. Only the women, who are in the first place responsible for the food supply in the house, may save food, at least for the next few days or weeks. The seeds necessary for the next sowing are also guarded by the women.

M [251]

M 428 768

Among the Chaco Indians there is no law of inheritance, owing to the native custom of destroying a man's property, even his house, after his death.

C 577

Honesty is one of the native virtues of the Indians. Among the primitive *Choroti* and *Ashluslay*, who at the time when I travelled in the Chaco were quite unaffected by European civilisation, thefts and other gross crimes were entirely unknown, being prevented by the strong social feeling. Honesty is not only displayed towards fellow-tribesmen, but also towards a stranger and a white man, unless he has through his own conduct forfeited the respect which the primitive Indian, owing to his natural sense of right, would normally have for his property. As a significant proof of this I may mention the following experience which I once had among the Choroti. In April 1912, shortly before I intended to leave these Indians and return to Yacuiba, one of my mules ran away from me and was lost in the forest in the neighbourhood of a Choroti village, and in spite of prolonged searching could not be found. At last I was obliged to leave the village without my mule. At the end of the same year, about eight months later, I again visited these regions and the same Choroti village. My Indian friends at once informed me that some time after I had left, my mule had been caught by some other Choroti Indians and was now being kept in a other village, a few hours walk further off. An Indian was at once sent for the animal, and on the following day the mule was brought and given back to me. The Indians, supposing that I would return some time, had kept the animal, fed it well and taken care of it. It is needless to say that it would have been the easiest thing for them to hide it until I had again left, and to keep it for ever. They however considered it their duty to restore it to its right owner, who was a white friend of theirs. It is also needless to add that had the mule been found by someone of the whites living in these regions, I should never have seen it again.

M 177 577

The savage Indians are frequently accused by the whites of dishonesty. There is, I think, some exaggeration in this; but as a rule however,

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S/12

M 177 577

to the extent that the Indian comes under the influence of the whites and gets «civilized», to that extent also he loses the virtue of honesty, as he loses many other virtues characteristic of him while he is in a state of nature. This again is chiefly due to the bad example given by the whites themselves. The latter steal from one another, infringe the proprietary rights of the Indians and commit other wrongs against them. The Indians, who are on this point comparable with children, naturally think they may do the same, and their very sense of justice seems to require that the same measure as is meted to them by the whites, they may themselves measure to the latter again.

M 273 578 627

The only occasion when crimes may be committed among the Choroti are during the great drinking-feasts. When the Indians are intoxicated with algaroba beer they easily begin to quarrel with one another, and these quarrels in extreme cases may end in homicide. Now the Indians certainly regard a homicide committed in a state of inebriation rather as an accident than as a crime, for the algaroba beer is sacred and an Indian inebriated by it is looked upon as possessed by a spirit and not in the ordinary sense responsible for his acts. But the Indians are anxious to prevent such accidents and this is above all the task of the women, who never themselves drink any intoxicating drinks. On two occasions I witnessed quarrels arising during the drinking-feasts. In one case an Indian, when excessively drunk, got mad and seized his bow and arrow to shoot another Indian on account of some old controversy. Immediately the women took hold of him, deprived him of his weapons, and compelled him to leave the scene of the feast and the whole village. He in fact left for an other village in the vicinity and remained absent for several days, when he was allowed to return tohis home. The minds of the two adversaries were then perfectly tranquillized and there was no more grudge between them. In the other case also the women intervened and seized the weapons from the quarrelling men to prevent fights and manslaughter. It is usual in such cases that the offending party is sent away from the village or «exiled» for some time.

T 674

Among the more advanced *Tobas* thefts occasionally take place, but there is a question whether this phenomenon is not due to the influence of the whites, since the Tobas have on the whole been more in contact with civilization than the Choroti. In the case of smaller thefts there is no

T 685

public punishment among the Tobas; the affair is left to the private concern of the person robbed and thethief. In more serious cases the Council

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

C 753

throwing spells embodied in certain material objects, small stones, cactus thorns, bones, certain insects, etc. We should say that it is the stone, thorn, etc. that causes the pains felt by the victim, but its real cause is the mysterious demon embodied in the object. This appears most clearly from the conjuration with which the medicine-man tries to remove the evil and in which the demon is directly addressed.

An epidemic is likewise caused by evil spirits, but independently of the operation of a wizard. Among these spirits there are real death-demons, who in the imagination of the Indians wander about the village carrying off one Indian after the other. The Indians are aware that these diseases, among which are small-pox, malarial fever, dysentery, etc., are imported by the whites, and they consider that their own medicine-men are powerless against them.

M 776 [177]

The animistic beliefs of the *M a t a c o* are much the same as those of the Choroti, but it is evident that the Mataco-Nocténes of Bolivia have been considerably influenced in their religion by the Tobas, as is the case in their general culture. The Mataco make a distinction between two kinds of lower spirits. The commonest kind of spirit, although not the most feared, are those whom the Indians call *aittáh*, generally adding the attribute *slámas* or *slahas* which means »small». These are of exactly the same nature as the majority of the spirits whom the Choroti call *mŏhsek*, although in external appearance they more resemble the *peyák* of the Tobas. Whereas in the imagination of the Choroti the *mŏhsek* have the shape of old men, the *aittáh* of the Mataco — and similarly the *peyák* of the Tobas — have the shape of young boys (*naítses*), but at the same time they are provided with wings, so that they can move as rapidly as the wind from one place to another. They are invisible, countless in number (*vúh*) and evilly-disposed (*tasukái*) towards mankind. (*Vúh aittáh tasukái*, »there are numberless evil spirits», the Mataco are in the habit of saying when speaking of the world of demons.) The ideas they entertain about them are the same as those of the Choroti. During the day these demons are not dangerous to men, for then they have retired far away to the plains and the forests. But as soon as night draws near they arrive in great numbers, although not in visible shape, dancing round the villages and huts which they like to visit with sickness and misfortune. The Indians try to keep them off by dancing, when they imitate the very movements which they fancy the demons make, by drumming, and by performing conjurations to cure patients already attacked by the demons.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba S/12

his soul is taken up to Paradise, *Piyím*, by his *peyák nŏtta*. Similarly, the medicine-men are believed to be able to make, with the aid of their guardian spirits, occasional journeys to *Piyím* even in their life-time. The Tobas address prayers to these spirits and even offerings are made to them.

The medicine-men of the *M a t a c o* also have a »good spirit» (*aittáh is*), of which much the same holds true as has been said of the »good spirits» of the Tobas and the Choroti. The *aittáh is* of the Mataco is however surnamed *aittáh talák*, i.e. »the Old One», and to that extent seems to be more strongly personified than the corresponding tutelary genius of the Tobas and the Choroti. The Old One of the Mataco is not a »Supreme Being» of the kind which is supposed to exist among certain primitive tribes; he is neither a creator of the world nor a guardian of morality. He is the particular guardian spirit of the medicine-men and plays his most important rôle in connection with the conjurations by means of which the latter try to cure disease. The Mataco ascribe disease to the operation of evil spirits. The cure, as usual, is effected by the expulsion of the evil intruder, but the medicine-man's own art is insufficient for that. He needs supernatural aid, and this aid is afforded him by the *aittáh talák*.

The goodness of the »Old One» however seems to be only relative; capriciousness is one of his properties. In some cases he helps and cures or relieves the patient; but in other cases he gives no relief however much he is invoked. The great question in a case of sickness is consequently: Is the Old One in a good temper and propitious or not? If the patient recovers through the treatment of the medicine-man, the Mataco say: *is aittáh talák*, »The Old One is good». On the other hand, if the patient dies, they say: »This time the Old One was not good».

It is hardly necessary to point out that the belief of the Chaco Indians in a »good spirit» is not due to Christian influence but is genuinely Indian. At the time when I visited the tribes of the Rio Pilcomayo they were very little affected by European civilization, both in their religion and in their general culture, and the savage Ashluslay, who also believe in a »good spirit», not at all. Besides, we know that the idea of individual guardian spirits, invoked by the medicine-men and assisting them in their operations, is by no means an exceptional phenomenon among the Chaco Indians, but is met with among many other Indian tribes also, both in South and in North America.

It has long been a current opinion among anthropologists that the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

M 796 535 [177]

I have so far only spoken of the dances and other rites which take place at the preparation of the sacred drinks. During the algaroba season, festivals are held almost continuously, and these festivals are chiefly celebrated with drinking-bouts and dancing. Those of the Chaco Indians who have been in contact with the whites and seen the great festival with which, in Argentine and Boliva, they celebrate their carnival in February say that the algaroba season is their own carnival time and that they, too, have their carnival dances. The dances which among the Choroti take place at that time have partly been described before in connection with the customs practised by these Indians at courtship and marriage. In addition to the customary courtship dance *Avúshe*, the great festival, which is called *lākinene*, is celebrated with two more dances, those called *Ahlénta* and *Jóhlōki*. *Jóhlōki* is the name by which the Choroti call the Tobas, a fact that seems to indicate that the Choroti have borrowed the dance from their neighbours. The Tobas themselves call the dance *Nahotti*. It is a ring-dance; the dancing men are arranged in a circle and have their arms round each other's waists, moving round to the right or to the left to the rhythm of a chant. The *Ahlénta* again is identical with the Toba dance *Nomi*. Nevertheless, the Choroti seem to have borrowed it from their southern neighbours, the Ashluslay Indians on the lower Pilcomayo, a fact that may be inferred from the name; for just as *Jóhlōki* means »the Toba dance», so *Ahlénta* means »the Ashluslay dance» (Choroti *Ahle* = Ashluslay). I would add in this connection that the dances of the Chaco tribes are, in the main, common to all the tribes; there are certain dances which occur among different tribes under different names.

C 796 535

C 533 535 796

The chants sung at the dances are rather monotonous and are composed of a series of words which apparently have no meaning; for instance in the *Jóhlōki*:

Hā-e-sa-alia,
Hiáh-hia-ália,
He-éh-hia-ália, hia-ália,
Hi-éh,
Hā-he-éh, hā-he-éh,
Hā-se-éh, hā-se-éh, hā-se-éh, etc.

C 796 535

Only the younger unmarried men perform these dances, the older ones being constantly engaged in drinking algaroba beer (*atás*). Unmarried girls are allowed to be present, but as we have seen they do not as a rule

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

Chapter XIX.

Ceremonial games.

M 524 177

During my stay among the Choroti my attention was drawn to a curious game which was played in all villages in the month of March and evidently had some mystic meaning. The game later on turned out to be »international» in the Chaco, most tribes knowing it and playing it in somewhat different forms. The Choroti call it *syuke*, the Tobas *soka*, the Ashluslay *syúkak*, etc., names which are evidently nothing but different corruptions of the Quichua word *chunca*, ten. Similarly the playing terms in the Chaco are as it were international and of Quichua origin, a fact which seems to support the assumption that at any rate the principal ideas underlying the game have been borrowed from the Quichua Indians.

C 524

I have only studied this game among the *Choroti* and the description I shall give of it in the following pages refers merely to the variety of the game existing among these Indians.[1])

The dice consist of four pieces of wood, which are on one side convex, on the other side quite flat. The convex side is often ornamented with certain incised figures. (See fig. 10, a.)

The player takes two dice in each hand, throws them up smoothly against each other and allows them to fall on the ground. The position taken by the dice on the ground determines the value of the cast. The points are reckoned in the following way:

[1]) Nordenskiöld described this game in 1910 in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, but its magical or religious significance — which, of course gives it its particular interest — has entirely escaped him. This may in part be due to the fact that Nordenskiöld never saw the game played at the proper season, the beginning of the winters, but arranged playing-parties at an other season to learn how it was played. On the other hand, it is a well-known fact that many ceremonies, which are in their character magical or religious, have been misunderstood by ethnologists and regarded as purely profane entertainments.

M [114]

[p. 201]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SKL

C 524 789

hard for existence. Now the game is supposed to have the effect of *increasing the fruit and making the Indians rich*. This is made possible by virtue of the fact that *among the Indians there is always someone who wins*, from whose luck all will benefit. The Indians believe that just as they can influence the course of nature, »hurry on» the growth of the crops, by beating drums, dancing, and shaking rattles, so they believe that at this critical period they can enhance the vegetative power of the useful trees and prevent starving by playing *shuke*. It seems to me probable that in this game the magical effects are produced merely by the procedure of playing — by the feverish pace at which the game goes on, and so forth — just as technique and the very rhythm play an essential part in such magical ceremonies as dancing and the beating of drums.

M 524 177 114

That the *shuke* game, so far as its principal features are concerned, has been borrowed by the Choroti from the mountain Indians, as has been suggested even by Nordenskiöld, is a matter beyond doubt and may be inferred from the playing terms themselves which are of Quichua origin (*shuke* = *chunca*, *tauca*, and probably *kima*). On the other hand, it is certain that the Incas never had an exactly similar game, and Nordenskiöld's imagination carries him too far when he tries to show that certain objects, found in archeological excavations on the mountain area of Ecuador, are nothing but counting-boards which have been used for a game more or less identical with the *shuke*. [1] Nordenskiöld's curious idea of connecting the said mysterious objects with the *shuke* game of the Chaco Indians entirely loses its importance in the face of the fact that, as I have shown elsewhere [2], the ancient Peruvian and Ecuadorian Indians had several »games of chance», none of which bore the slightest resemblance to the Chaco game just mentioned. The map published by the same ethnographer, showing the supposed distribution of »games of chance» in South America, was therefore decidedly prematurely drawn. [3] The particular character of the Chaco game has obviously, in

[1] See his article »Spieltische aus Peru und Ecuador», in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Heft 2 u. 3. 1918, p. 169.

[2] See my *Ceremonial Games of the South American Indians* (Societas Scientiarum Fennica. *Commentationes humanarum litterarum*, Helsingfors 1930).

[3] Whereas Nordenskiöld erroneously assigns the neighbourhood of Quito in Ecuador as a region where a game like the *shuke* has been practised, he knows nothing of the games of chance I have myself discovered later in that country: the *kuaira* game practised in the southern and eastern mountain regions, the *kasiriba* and *sinqu* in vogue among the forest Indians on the rivers Bobonaza and Pastaza.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

many details, been determined by local conditions, and therefore must differ from the games customary among the ancient mountain Indians. Thus all ceremonial dice games in the Inca empire seem to have been connected with the *cult of the dead*, an idea which is wholly foreign to the Chaco Indians. Further, the Incas probably knew only of *portable* playing-boards, whereas the Chaco Indians always draw the counting-board on the ground. Moreover, the latter Indians use arrows as markers, the place where the player is »drowned«, is called »river«, and so forth.

The Chaco Indians, in all probability, have only borrowed the leading ideas underlying the game, together with the terminology, from their neighbours in the west, and to a certain extent invented a new game, giving these borrownings an application of their own. When the primitive Indians from the interior of the country came in contact with the comparatively civilized peoples in the west, they learned to know certain games which were said to have the marvellous effect of making the fields fruitful and filling the granaries of the Indians. We may assume that it was precisely this *practical* importance of the game that impressed the mind of the primitive Indians and induced them to invent a game similar to that customary among the Incas and to ascribe to it a similar magical efficacy. But the *shuka* was not the only game which originated in this way under the influence of the Inca civilization. Various other games, both games of chance and games of skill, seem to be in vogue in the Chaco, even among tribes so distant as the Lenguas of Paraguay, but of their possible ceremonial character nothing is known. If we may trust the ethnologists who have hitherto related the customs of the Chaco tribes, the *shuka* game is the only one to which a magical significance is ascribed.

Nor does he know the *sake* game practised by the Quichua Indians all over the Bolivian mountain area. The value of »culture traits« so arbitrarily drawn seems to me most doubtful.

[pp. 206-230 inclusive not processed for the File.]

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

I had not planned to investigate. I hoped that the notes I took then would be useful for a more systematic and complete study of the Matako in the future. I should never have thought of publishing these tales and documents had I not good reason to believe that there is little chance for me to return to the Chaco.[1] Even if destiny should take me again to that country, I do not know whether the same material would be available. The disappearance of the old native cultures in South America is rapid, especially among tribes of a low cultural level.

The Matako, more than any other Chaco tribe, have been exposed to the degrading influence of white colonists, but there still remain some villages, especially on the upper Pilcomayo and on the middle course of the Bermejo, where the natives live according to ancient standards. Those who had their villages along the »linea», the new railway between Formosa and Embarcación, were the most miserable wretches that I saw in South America. Generous English missionaries try with very precarious means to rescue the Indians by extending to them the protection of the Mission stations and by helping during the critical period of transition from their native culture toward a new form of life. The mission work among the Matako has proved most successful. The Indians have shown extraordinary aptitude and under the direction of the English missionaries they display remarkable talents in crafts that they ignored completely a few years ago. Their zest for instruction has always been deep and their enthusiasm must sometimes be moderated. The rapidity and ease with which the Matako adapt themselves to our modern civilization remains one of the most puzzling problems that I met with in South America. Seen in their native environment the Matako seem to be the most irreducible tribe of the Chaco. Even their physical aspect carries an impression of

[1] I was unable to check many of the ethnological data given in the notes. To make them scientifically available I have reproduced the information in the very terms of the Indians.

115 old—the oldest Indian in the mission I believe. Esteemed by everyone, he had developed a consciousness of his respectability that was sometimes a bit comic. He spoke with poise, choosing elegant and sophisticated words the meanings of which he never really understood. His language was a slight parody on the affected speech of certain colonists. In his youth he had lived with his tribe which was still independent of and untouched by European civilization, but later in life, like many intelligent Indians, he deemed it useful and convenient to join the white settlers for a while. He was among the first natives to help the missionaries and became one of the first and best Christians of the Missions. Martin's long contact with mestizo settlers and later with missionaries made of him an informant of lesser value than Pedro. His tales were generally twisted so that they would fit to the new type of living which had developed in Martin's community. In working with me he tried to rationalize the old lore of his tribe as if I were a colonist with no experience in Indian ways. However, his contribution is valuable because he was an old man extremely well informed in primitive customs of his tribe.

• 117 538 Martin's tales are not all Indian, although I expressed to him several times my desire to have only native lore. He told me many tales of distinctly European origin. He always insisted that they were known by other Indians and consequently were genuine. As some of these European tales had been told my be Pedro who also denied their foreign source, one may consider them as having been incorporated into the modern folklore of the Indians. Often Indian elements as well as Indian characters in such tales (for instance, the Rainbow playing the part of an Ogre) point out that European motifs have been worked up by the native story tellers and readjusted to the environment. For that reason I feel that tales of recent introduction should not be neglected. They may give precious hints as to the diffusion of European stories among the natives of America, and indicate the way they have been integrated into native culture. The intro-

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duction of these tales to the Matako is quite recent since the Indians have been in regular touch with white settlers for only thirty or forty years.

The most important character in the Matako tales is familiar to all students of North American ethnology — he is the Trickster. His Matako name is *Takxwax*, *Tokxwax* or *Tawkxwax*, according to the region. The last form which I have adopted is used at Algarrobal, near Embarcación. My two informants agreed that *Tawkxwax* was a »loco» a fool and by this word they meant a practical joker, a person who likes to play harmful tricks on people. The bad people in the region were always referred to as »locos». The adventures of *Tawkxwax* strongly suggest those of the famous tricksters of North American ethnology. The resemblance is even more accentuated in the tales of other tribes. In the mythology of the Toba Pilagá the tricks or the adventures are attributed to the fox who is the South American equivalent of the Coyote. The perfect parallels between the stories concerning *Tawkxwax* and those in which the fox is the hero are so numerous and striking that I often tried to make the Matako confess that *Tawkxwax* was the fox of the other tribes. They always denied my identification and insisted that *Tawkxwax* was a man.

Everyone familiar with North American folklore will recognize in these tales many similarities between the Chaco tales and those which constitute the rich oral literature of North American tribes. I am too little acquainted with North American ethnology to draw parallels but no doubt they are numerous. The essential part played by the Trickster in mythology is a feature which cannot be neglected. Parallels between North American and South American Indian tales will be more obvious when I am able to issue the mythology of the Toba Pilagá that I had the opportunity to study more systematically and thoroughly than the Matako. The Matako mythology is only a short introduction to a more rich and complete material.

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hoppers. *Tawkxwax* got the idea he would fasten the trees to the ground so that they could not run away. So the trees were fixed to the ground and thus they lost their power to move, the power which had been so useful to men before.

25. The Iguana and Tawkxwax (Pedro)

Formerly the tail of the iguana was very long. *Tawkxwax* set out to catch him but at first he could only succeed in stepping on his tail. At last he caught him but the iguana escaped, leaving its tail in his fingers.

26. Tawkxwax and the Menstruating Men (Pedro)

The earth was under water. Rain made beer and invited everybody to the feast. All the guests came dressed in their most beautiful clothes. The mosquitoes had red mantles (ponchos) but they would not tell how they had stained them because they feared that the rain would be angry with them. They had dyed their mantles with human blood. Although *Tawkxwax* was a wealthy man and had great riches and wonderful garments under the ground, he appeared at the feast in old rags. Offended the rain insulted *Tawkxwax* who went home to change his clothes. When he returned to the feast he had on a poncho, a hat with a broad brim, a handkerchief and splendid boots. The rain became jealous and thought that *Tawkxwax* was too smart. He tried to strike him with lightning. *Tawkxwax* who could not understand why the rain was acting so strangely, cut a branch, sharpened it and put it into the barrel of a Remington gun. Taking careful aim with this weapon he ran after the rain. The rain knowing of the wickedness of *Tawkxwax* asked himself, »Where can I go?» He climbed a tree and from it climbed to the sky. Thus chased into the sky, the rain has not come back because he is still afraid of *Tawkxwax*.

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H. TALES OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN OR WITH PREDOMINANT EUROPEAN ELEMENTS

117. The Magic Flight (Pedro)

A Matako had a very pretty daugther who was loved by a man. The girl's father said, »I will give you my daughter if by noon you dig a well deep enough for me to get water from.» At noon the girl took her lover some food and found that he had only dug a hole six feet deep. The girl said, »I love you, I will help you and then we can marry.» She blew and the earth cracked open and the man drew water out of the well. The girl returned to her father and he asked, »Has he drawn water from the well?» »Yes.» »You may marry him, he is a good worker.»

The girl's father then ordered the man to build a corral and to have it finished by noon. At the time the woman went to give him his food she saw that he had only put up poles for a distance of 300 feet. She said, »I love you, I will help you so you can finish your work quickly.» She blew and her breath felled trees and broke off branches which went over and stuck themselves upright in the ground. The fence was completed right away. The father wanted to give him another task. The woman said to her husband, »I cannot help you, we must flee otherwise my father will kill you.» Before they left the girl made a heap of saliva and left it in her hut. During the night the father, who was distrustful, kept calling his daughter to see if she was in her hut. The saliva answered him each-time he called but as the night wore on the voice became weak and in the morning the words could hardly be heard for the saliva had dried up. The father was aware of the trick his daugther had played on him and he started to pursue her. When the daughter heard her father following them she changed her husband into a *yuckan*[1] and herself into a log lying across the road. The couple fled farther and as the father drew

[1] Bombaceae, see note 1 p. 18.

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near again the girl threw her comb and it became a forest. In order to escape her angry father who followed her everywhere she changed herself first into a *tartago* (Ricinus) and then into a hawk (*carancho*). At last she changed herself into a river so wide that her father could not cross over to the other side.

[Another version of this tale tells how the girl became pregnant and gave birth the same day. When the father opened the door of his daugther's hut he found in it a child who was his grandson.]

118. Opa (Pedro)

Opa had a brother who forced him to gather the corn in his field. There were many stalks of corn and the work was to be finished before midnight. Opa did his best but he knew that he could never finish the work in time. The ants came to help him and they gathered all the corn. When the brother came to see how the work was progressing he found that the work had been completed.

The same brother ordered Opa to drink all the water in a certain pool Opa drank as much as he could but the pool was not dry. He heard the voice of *Katęla*, mother-in-law of the water. She said, »You could never drink all that water, but I will help you.« She drank and the pool dried up at once. The brother of Opa was very pleased.

Opa caught many fish with a hook. His brother was also lucky. They set out again and the brother said to Opa, »We shall eat our fish, but let us begin with yours.« Opa agreed. His brother ate all the fish but when Opa wanted to have his brother's fish he was refused. Opa was left with nothing to eat. He went back to the pool and fished again. He caught even more fish than he had the first time. His brother came and asked him for some fish as he was very hungry. Opa would not give him any because his brother was stingy and bad.

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119. The Boy Who Killed the Rainbow (Pedro)

A boy was ordered to look after his grandmother's sheep. One day a man who was passing by offered to trade him a dog for a sheep. At first the boy was not willing for he was afraid his grandmother would beat him, but the man assured him the dog would fight for him because instead of nails in his paws there were knives. The boy went home, leaving the dog outside after having ordered him to run to his side if he called to him. He went inside the house and his grandmother began to beat him. He called his dog and the dog rushed into the house with such force that the door was flung against the woman and she fell down. As she was getting up the old woman said she believed he had exchanged a sheep for the dog and she caught the dog and tied him up. Then the old woman ordered the boy to climb a tree and when he was up the tree she let her husband's wild pigs loose. When the wild pigs began to root up the tree the boy called to his dog, who cut his leash and killed the wild pigs. The old woman, angry at the death of her husband's wild pigs, sent the boy to his sister who was married to a rainbow. Before arriving at his sisters the boy hold his dog to come as soon as he called. He arrived at the womans' house and told her that his grandmother had beaten him for having given a sheep to a hungry traveler. He was careful not to tell her that he had exchanged the sheep for a dog. He asked her for a sheep to replace the one he had given away. She told him that he had done wrong by coming to her for her husband, the rainbow, would eat him when he returned. She advised him to run away before the return of her husband, but he did not follow her advice. When her husband was coming home she hid the boy behind same hides. The rainbow smelled the odor of man and asked his wife who was there. She said there was nobody there and that he was just smelling *charqui*.[1] Not satisfied with her answer the

[1] Dry meat.

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177 X539 X773 rainbow looked everywhere, found nothing and went to sleep. The boy left his hiding place, sharpened his knife and cut the rainbow's throat, but the rainbow awoke and swallowed the boy just after he had called his dog. The dog rushed in and grabbing the rainbow by the back tore his belly open. The boy got out and cut the body of the rainbow into pieces and threw them away. The woman said that since he had killed her husband, she was going to marry him and that she would see if he would give her human dry meat. The boy told her that he was not as bad as the rainbow and that he would kill many animals.

120. The Boy Who Killed the Rainbow (second version) (Martin)

Once there was an old woman who owned many sheep. She had no one to take care of her flocks and she wanted a herder. One day in going to get some wood she discovered a child in a lonely place. She took him in and fed him. She did not know who the child belonged to but she was satisfied because it was a boy. She thought, »He will grow up and be my servant.» The child grew up and began to tend herd. One day he met two devils and he struck a bargain with them. They gave him two dogs in exchange for some sheep. The boy knew the sheep were not his, but the devils insisted so much that he was obliged to agree. He went back to his house and the old woman counted the sheep. She saw that some where missing. She said, »Where are the missing sheep?» He answered, »I met two men and I was so afraid they might kill me I traded some sheep for two dogs.» The boy was left with the dogs. The following day the old woman made herself sick and said to the child, »Go and get me some herbs, don't take the dogs with you but leave them here.» The dogs were kept in the house tied with thick chains. They were lying very quietly together paying attention to each noise. The boy set out and found a tree with some flowers. These flowers were the herbs the old

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woman wanted. The herbs were defended by some wild boars that arrived with thunder and wind. The child seeing them shouted. The dogs heard him and broke their chains, which fell off, and ran to help their master. They charged the wild boars, routed and killed them. The child picked the flowers and took them to his mother.

The following day he set out on a journey with the two dogs. At sunset he found a house and stayed there. The people there told him to avoid taking a certain road where there was a man who ate people. The child said, »I will kill that man.» He arrived where the man was. This man was the *lewo* (rainbow). There the boy met his sister. »How are you, my sister?» She replied, »I am a prisoner of that man. Why did you come here? That man will eat you.» »No, I will kill him first.» He went out of the house. The man reached him. He had thunder and lightning with him and rain. The child tied a pair of scissors to the neck of each dog. The monster swallowed the dogs and they passed from one side to the other in his stomach, badly tearing his internal organs. The monster was like a whale and he tried to drown them by spewing water everywhere, but the dogs shook the water off.

121. The Children and the Jaguar (Martin)

Once there were a man and a woman who lived in a village. They were upset by their two children, a boy and a girl, because they never allowed them to make any pots. The man took them to the forest. He found there a honey comb in a tree. He dug it out. When he got the honey out of the tree he said to the children, »Stay here and enjoy this honey, I will go and get some more. As soon as I find it I will call you.» The children remained there and ate the honey. At sunset the boy said, »Our father is certainly lost, that is why he has not called us.» They began to shout and cry and look for him, but their father did not answer for he had

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gone home. Late in the evening they discovered a stone house in the middle of a glade. On the top of the house was a chair and leading up to the chair were some stairs. The children sat on top of the house and waited. About eight o'clock they heard the roaring of jaguars. The girl said to her brother, »What is it?» The boy answered, »Do not be afraid, you hear the drum of our father, tomorrow we will go home.»

When the jaguar arrived, the girl cried. The boy threw at it with his sling and almost killed the jaguar. The jaguar said »My children, don't be afraid, I have come to save you.» They went down and dressed the jaguar's wound, which was full of worms. The jaguar recovered. The following day the jaguar bought them a cow which they butchered. As they were eating the meat another jaguar happened to pass by. He said to the first jaguar, »Why are you keeping these children, you feed them although you know their parents hate us.» »They are my children, said the jaguar, they came to see me. If you are intending to slaughter them, you must start with me.» The jaguars fought over the children. The boy helped his friend and together they killed the other jaguar. The jaguar took the children with him so that they might learn something about the world. The children were already grown up. They set out for a village 50 miles away. Halfway there they found a huge serpent blocking the road. The people they met on their way said to them, »Don't go there the serpent will eat you.» But the jaguar and the children answered, »We shall go and if we meet the serpent, well, we shall kill it.» The people treated the three voyagers with kindness. Before reaching the serpent there was a house where they lodged. The woman, who owned the house, told them, »The serpent will eat you.» The boy replied, »If you see crows lying there you will know we are dead, but if you don't see them it will be a sign that we are on the other side.»

They found the serpent sleeping. The jaguar seized it by the neck and the boy cut it into pieces with a cutlass. They

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butchered the serpent. They were already in the new country. They arrived at a little house. The owner said, »How could you come, the serpent kills everybody?» Well, we have killed the serpent.» The man notified the village, »A man has finished the serpent.» The people would not believe it. A chief gathered the people and said, »Let us go and see what the trouble is.» The chief went away with his party. He found the dead serpent. He cut off its tail and its head but the child had cut out its tongue long before and had kept it.

The chief went back and presented the head and tail to the great chief saying, »I have killed the serpent.» The great chief called the boy and asked him if it was true that he had slaughtered the serpent. The boy said, »It is true, here you have the tongue.» The chief was very angry having the great chief treat him as a liar. The chief lay in ambush for the boy. He was going to kill him. Early in the morning he went to catch him. The boy had only his knife but with it he killed all his enemies. He remained in the village and the jaguar came back.

122. The Boy Who Killed the Wicked Men (Martin)

There was an old man who had a daughter. The daughter had lost her husband and she remained a widow with two children. (XIX). The old man, who was one-eyed, told the children that they should not eat fish. They had always obeyed him. They set out and found a pool full of fish and one of the children said, »Even though our grandfather forbids us to eat fish because he is one-eyed, we will eat some.» When they returned to their home that evening they said, »Mother, we ate fish today.» The old man heard them and said, »So you have eaten fish today?» He got up and chased them with a cudgel to beat them for having disobeyed him. The boys went to a village where there were houses. The owners were giants who blocked the way and ate people.

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The boy[1] stayed there and the giants allowed him to rest. At sunset the giants fell asleep. The boy was awake and thinking how he could escape. While the people were asleep he got out and went on his journey. He arrived at the world's end, at the seashore. Before he arrived there he met a widow. The widow received him very kindly and gave him food. She told him how he could cross the sea. He arrived at the sea and an alligator came near. He said, »I want to go to the other side.» The animal said, »Get on me.» He got on the alligator and he landed on the other side. There he found a village with very nice people. He remained with them. The chief of the people liked the boy very much. He stayed there one year. Sometimes the village would disappear and sometimed it would come back. One day the boy said to the chief, »Father, I want to go back.» The man said, »All right, I shall give you a stick which will be useful to you on many occasions.» He gave him the stick and the boy returned, crossing the sea on the back of the alligator. He set out and arrived at the place of the widow. He said to her, »I will kill the bad people who killed your husbands.» The widow was greatly pleased and she gave him much food so that he could go on with his journey. He arrived where the wicked men were. They said, »Here is the man who escaped us, we shall eat him.» The boy said, »All right, here I am, do what you will with me.» The bad men came and he knocked them down with his stick.

There was peace in the world and everybody was happy for he had killed the wicked people. The boy set out and arrived in his country. His mother was very happy and he killed his grandfather who had made him leave home.

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[1] The informant forgot about the second son and in the continuation of his story speaks of one only.

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123. The Child and the Friendly Animals

There were three fishermen and their mother, who was a very old woman. They fisherman set out on a journey. The first day they held a meeting and they decided that they would eat first the provisions of their younger brother and later the food of the two others. They did as they planned. When they had finished they had not done as they, but each of the elder brothers ate his provisions without giving a bit to their younger brother. The poor boy was obliged to live on the little that was left. On their way they met some ants who were trying to eat a piece of bread. The elder brothers said to the younger one, »Eat that piece of bread.» The boy said, »Poor animals they are not like us, they have no hands. I will crumble this piece of bread so that they can eat.» He crumbled it and the ants ate. Farther on they met a falcon with a pigeon. The brothers said, »Take that pigeon from the falcon.» But the boy replied, »I will cut up this pigeon in order that the falcon can eat it more easily, the poor bird has no knife.» He gave the falcon the meat chopped up in small pieces. The falcon said, »Thank you, if you need me, I will help you.» Still farther on they met a jaguar and a puma and a prairie wolf (*aguara*). They had killed a cow and they were trying to quarter it. The brothers said, »If you are hungry you can take meat from this cow that the animals have slain.» The boy said, »They have no knife. I will help them quarter the cow. Each shall receive his share.» He did as he had said. The tiger said, »Son, if ever you get into any trouble and cannot get out of it, call us, we will be there.»

In the evening they arrived at the house of a man. This man had large fields sown with rice. He spoke to the brothers and asked them if they could help him harvest his crop for a distance of four miles. The two elder brothers pointed to the younger one and said, »He knows how to do it in a moment.» The boy did not know what to do. The owner

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of the field was a devil. He said to the child, »I will wait until you succeed,» and he went to his house to take a nap. The boy set out and on his way met an old woman. She spoke to him. »Why are you so sad? Why are you crying?» »It is the fault of my brothers who abuse and harm me every day.» The old woman said, »Don't you remember the animals you helped? They are waiting for you.» The boy realised that it was true. He went away and met a big ant. The ant said, »If you have some bread, put a piece at each corner.» He did so. In the night a party of ants gathered around the field and harvested it. At dawn the rice was stored up and you could see piles of it very clean without straw. They boy removed the rice. The devil was satisfied. That same day he went to the brothers and said, »Which of you can rescue my daughter who is in the power of another devil?» The brothers pointed to their younger brother. »He can do that.» The younger one set out in search of the woman. Before he arrived he met the puma, jaguar, and the prairie wolf (*aguara*) and also the falcon and the ants. The tiger gave him some good advice. The falcon spoke, »You change into a falcon.» The boy changed himself into a falcon. He found the stolen woman sitting with her husband in the lobby of house. The man was so bad that he would kill everything that came near his house. The man stood up and seized his bow and arrow to kill the falcon, but the girl said, »Don't kill him, he is tame, I will give him some food.» The man did not kill him. The bird went out. He held another meeting with his friends, the animals. »How can I kill this man? The father of the girl told me that he cannot be slain even if he is cut into pieces.» The jaguar said, »You must find out how many lives this giant has and in what way he can be put to death. Go and ask the girl. She will ask the man and when the girl finds out you will certainly hear about it.» The boy again changed himself into a falcon and went to see the girl. He chose a moment when she was alone and said. »I am a man sent by your

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father. I wish to have you ask that man how he is going to die, how he can be killed.» It was time for dinner. They were eating. Before they had finished the girl spoke, »Why don't you die when they kill you? If you really love me you will tell me where your life is and what your death is.» The devil said, »Why should I not love you, I love you very much. At last he said, »I have my life in a lagoon. My first life is a bull, in the bull is a cactus, in the cactus is a pigeon, in the pigeon an egg and in the egg my life. That is the last one. The man who kills these three animals and brings the egg and strikes me on the forehead will end my lives.» They finished their meal at the siesta time. The falcon went out again. The boy returned to his fellow animals and told them what he had heard. They discussed the matter and went to see where the bull was. They found him sleeping under an algarroba tree. The jaguar and the puma hunted the bull and killed it. They cut it and opened its stomach. The cactus jumped out and ran to a pool. They caught it and cut off its head. They opened it. The pigeon flew out, but before it reached the lagoon the falcon captured it and brought it back. They opened its stomach and took an egg out. The boy set out this time in the guise of a boy. When he arrived at the devil's house the devil was lying. He struck him on the head with the egg and his life ended. They took the woman to give her back to her father. He was very pleased to see her again. The devil said to the young man, »If you wish you may marry my daughter.» But the boy thought, »If I marry the daughter of this devl, perhaps he will kill me, I had better go». He said to the devil, »My brothers can get water out of this stone.» The devil ordered them to get water out of the stone. They could not and the devil killed them and ate them. The boy went back to his mother.

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Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Río Pilcomayo and the Río Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *cawguaté* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *alpis* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *owtshe;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

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[177] Fig. 2.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-photo. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the *satnáy* and *sitóy*, and consequently the girls from the *satnáy* preferred to marry men of the *sitóy* band, and girls of the *sitóy* men of the *satnáy* band. The two bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the [622] two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together [591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily, [944] as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the [575] advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are [947] considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final [581] test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *enatsha tahuyéy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

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been told about a Toba or a Pilaga who killed himself. Apparently, suicide is a culture trait restricted to the Matako.

Can this pathological condition be attributed to the life in the mission and to the discipline imposed upon the natives who have shown willingness to become Christians? The psychological motivation for conversion is undoubtedly fear of the white men and hunger. The missions are a buffer between the Indians and the ruthless white colonists. In the missions the Indians find jobs and, in case of distress, food. They also receive free medical treatment. The price they must pay for these privileges is to give up dancing and drinking, to abandon warfare and native sports and to forget shamanism. In addition they are expected to go to church twice daily and the children and many adults spend part of the day in school. Life under such conditions is extremely dull. All the activities that made life worth while disappear unless they can secretly play hockey or indulge in a drinking bout. This, of course, they quite frequently do. Although their present situation can explain their indifference, their anxieties and their lack of attachment to life, can the mission discipline be held responsible for the Metako suicidal mania?

In six of the cases cited above, marital maladjustment was blamed for the suicide attempt. In one case, the suicide was attributed to lack of sexual gratification. One couple attempted suicide because of the insults showered upon them by an angry and frustrated woman. One case may be ascribed both to sexual maladjustment and fear (the case of Martin). Criticism by neighbors is the cause in one instance. In only one case that of the old woman who had lost her son, can grief be considered the determining reason for the suicide.

In addition, there is no doubt that suicide among these people has a decidedly aggressive character. The Matako use suicide as a threat; by killing themselves, they punish the person who has offended them. The punitive character of suicide leads to the problem of aggression and aggressiveness among these people. In daily life little direct aggression is shown in their mutual relations. There are almost no quarrels; ordinarily men are not harsh to the women. Children are coddled and are seldom scolded. Nevertheless, strong aggresive tendencies exist. Whoever has witnessed a hockey party on the Pilcomayo loses any illusion he may have had about the gentleness and softness of Matako manners. In its brutality and fierceness each hockey party resembles a pitched battle. The Indians paint themselves and dress as if they were getting ready to face a real enemy. The teams are formed by men who are related by blood or who live in the same community. The adversaries are frequently members of bands which are on unfriendly

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terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

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most that can be said is that the mania found a suitable climate for continuation in that atmosphere of disintegration and pessimism. It must be remembered that similar crises have been observed from the very beginning of the missionary era. It may well be, therefore, that suicide was an institutionalized form of protest under the conditions of the earlier culture undertaken for some concrete reason by one individual who could not otherwise effectively punish members of the in-group, and followed by others whose desires were kindled by the first example.

Suicides seem to have occurred with relative frequency among the Kaingang who were gathered on a reservation in the State of Sao Paulo. Since in certain cases they seem to have been caused by analogous situations to those found among the Matako, the following passage by Maniser may be of interest: "Suicides caused by family quarrels are very common. I know of several cases: Cagndiri attempted to hang herself because of some affair with her husband's brother; for that reason she was expelled from home. Vangrikuiix tried to hang herself when her husband planned to abandon her. Nazo's wife hanged herself to death because of an affair with her husband's brother, quite a young man. Old Karege's son killed himself by hanging after a quarrel with his wife who had refused to eat palmito which he had brought back from the forest. There were two other cases of suicide during the two years the Kaingang were under supervision."[1]

The cases of suicide among South American natives listed by Wiese, in his book "Selbstmord und Todesfurcht bei den Naturvölkern" (Zutphen, 1933) are based on vague references in the travel literature of the last century and as a rule are valueless for science.

[1] Les Kaingangs, 23th International Congress of Americanists, New York, 1928, p. 760-761.

Mataco SI 7
Toba SI 12

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Matacos or Noctenes

This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to time, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

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A group of these Indians in times past formed a part of the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

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These Indians are very numerous and in small groups extend as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, although they maintain friendly relations with the Toba, to whom they are considered to be inferior.

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Their physiognomy is overly languid; sadness can be read in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness; they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

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1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make mead from other wild fruits; they do not make <u>chicha</u> because they hardly plant maize.

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They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.

Mataco SI7
Choroti SK6

M /320 cont./

771 They have a vague idea of superior beings, whom they fear
776 without worshiping them; the cleverest one becomes the sorcerer
756 and exploits the poverty of his companions, especially today when
648 they are earning money from the whites, to whom they lend im-
464 portant services.

M They frequently move from the region that they occupy to
167 the Argentine Republic; they work, dress, learn some Spanish
179 and a slight smattering of civilization, and return to their lands to live as before.

Choroti

Ci The zone located southeast of Toba territory is occupied
131 by the Choroti Indians, who have their own language. They
199 occupy the geographic degree 22° 30' latitude and 64° 10' longitude, on the left bank of the Pilcomayo River.

Ci They are quite numerous and peaceful, and they are not
181 treacherous like their neighbors, the Toba. Nevertheless, they
648 inspire respect in all the neighboring tribes; if a mission were to be established at said degree, the conquest of all the Bolivian territory /321/ up to 24° would be accomplished without the need of so many small forts, which are such a great expense to the Nation and which do not create centers of trade and civilization.

Ci Father Gianelli in years past visited the Choroti Indians,
797 was received with displays of affection and appreciation, and
199 found among them good inclinations toward becoming civilized, but at that time the harvest was too much for so few evangelical workers.

Ci The Choroti are not so lazy and savage as the other tribes;
181 they devote themselves to the cultivation of a few seeds and to
241 the raising of cattle, although on a small scale. They are also
231 hunters, however, and when they occupy the banks of the
224 Pilcomayo, they take advantage of the fruits the river brings them, especially in the great floods.

Chorotí SF6
Mataco SF7
Güisnais

Ci 301 302 191 /321 cont./ Doubtless through being very close to the Toba, they pierce their ear lobes, in which they put pieces of wood, and they also stain their faces.

Ci 648 [464] In the expeditions to the Paraguay they have never shown themselves to be hostile to the whites and soldiers; rather they have lent important services and it was they who saved the life of Señor Touvar and his companions when they became separated from the expedition. Therefore the reduction of these Indians to civilized life would be very profitable.

Güisnáis

M 131 101 These Indians occupy the western bank of the Pilcomayo facing the Choroti Indians and southwest of the region occupied by the Mataco. The geographic degree of their territory, with a very slight difference, is the same as that of the Choroti, since they are separated from the latter only by the river bed.

M 101 181 241 231 197 They are a division of the Mataco; they speak the latter's language with very little difference; their customs are nearly identical and their number quite small. They are of a peaceful nature like the Choroti, and like them, they plant gourds and other vegetables. They also devote themselves to the raising of domestic animals, such as cows, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens.

M 167 177 464 224 Even the Güisnáis frequently come out for jobs in the Argentine Republic, from where they also bring back weapons, in order to use them particularly in the woods, killing birds, wild boars, deer, and other quadrupeds.

M 174 171 176 [156] They have more religious ideas than other tribes, and it seems that their great-grandparents might have belonged to some former Argentine mission, because, more than others, they recognize a true divinity. /322/ Nonetheless in their great ignorance they confuse ideas, and in great fear they recognize in sorcerers a power that they do not have.